



Campus Compact
New York & Pennsylvania



**CAMPUS COMPACT OF
NEW YORK & PENNSYLVANIA**

*Host Site Application
Guidance*

Announcement &
Instructions for Application

**AmeriCorps*VISTA Program
2021 - 2022**

Applications Due: November 12, 2020

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In partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Campus Compact of New York and Pennsylvania (CCNYPA) is pleased to announce the release of the Host Site Application for our AmeriCorps VISTA projects to our member institutions and/or community organization for the 2021-2022 academic year.

In exchange for a full-time CCNYPA AmeriCorps*VISTA, serving a 12-month term, host sites are required to:

- Be a member of CCNYPA; or
- A community organization with commitment to partnering with a higher education institute by the end of the VISTA year; and
- Pay a **non-refundable** AmeriCorps VISTA program fee of **\$6,500 \$4,000 one-time discounted fee** by Friday, July 9th, 2021

CCNYPA is accepting host site project applications for new and returning projects now through **Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 12 noon.**

These are competitive awards through CCNYPA, approved by CNCS, and will be granted based upon the quality of the project and its alignment with the mission of AmeriCorps VISTA and the goals of the CCNYPA*VISTA program. All projects are contingent on CNCS funding.

The purpose of the AmeriCorps VISTA program is to enable organizations and low-income communities to expand their capacity to work on eliminating the root causes of poverty. CCNYPA*VISTA projects should be developed around a three-year timeline for completion that builds community capacity and ultimately leads to a project that is self-sustaining.

The project and CCNYPA*VISTA member's work must explicitly address the following **anti-poverty program goals**:

- To develop or enhance campus-community efforts to address one of the identified project focus areas;
- To create, develop, or sustain reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships between the campus and community organizations, leaders, and members;
- To foster CCNYPA*VISTA members as professionals and emerging leaders in the fields of community development, civic engagement, and/or higher education.

Intent to Apply/Re-Apply

All organizations planning to apply/re-apply for an AmeriCorps VISTA project (Year 1, Year 2, or Year 3) must complete the **Intent to Apply/Re-Apply form** ([Click Here](#)). This form should be submitted by **October 16, 2020**.

After reviewing the Intent to Apply/Re-Apply forms, CCNYPA will send your organization a Google Folder Link containing the application (this is where you will complete & submit all forms).

For new projects, CCNYPA will reach out to possibly set up a phone/zoom call to discuss the potential project, address any concerns, and answer any questions.

Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA

Founded in 1965, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a federal anti-poverty national service program designed to provide resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to address poverty and poverty-related problems in the United States. In 1993, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of national service programs, housed at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

Projects must be developed in accordance with four core principles: an anti-poverty focus; community empowerment; sustainable solutions; and capacity building.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Prospective and current AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors must engage people of the communities affected by the project in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating the project. Each project must be responsive and relevant to the lives of community residents and must tap into inherent community assets, strengths, and resources.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as short-term resources to build the long-term sustainability of anti-poverty efforts. VISTA projects make a lasting difference through the commitment, energy, and initiative that VISTA members bring to the community. Projects must be developed with a goal to phase out the need for VISTAs and have the project continue without VISTA resources.

CAPACITY BUILDING

VISTAs create systems that remain long after their term of service ends. VISTA projects expand the scale, impact, and resource-leveraging ability of specific anti-poverty initiatives. VISTA members strengthen sponsors' efforts by expanding community partnerships, securing long-term resources, and addressing specific local needs, with all activities focused on creating pathways out of poverty for low-income communities. VISTA members must focus on building the capacity of specific anti-poverty programs and interventions and not on general capacity building for the sponsor or its sites.

While VISTAs focus on capacity-building activities, they may, on occasion, perform limited direct service activities when deemed necessary to complete the VISTA's overall capacity-building assignment. These incidental activities should be written into the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) if known at the beginning of the VISTA's term of service.

VISTAs are not staff members or employees of the sponsoring organizations to which they are assigned. VISTAs may not engage in activities at sponsoring organizations that would displace or supplant paid staff, contractors, or existing volunteers. These prohibitions against displacement and supplantation include activities related to the application and management of other CNCS grants and programs.

ANTI-POVERTY FOCUS

The statutory purpose of AmeriCorps VISTA is to strengthen and support efforts to eliminate and alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems in the United States.

The organizations supported with VISTA resources address poverty in many ways. Some projects address social determinants of health and well-being (e.g. improving education, neighborhood resilience, access to health care, and healthy food); other approaches are targeted directly at increasing a household's income and assets (housing, financial savings and asset development); and still other approaches attempt to address larger regional systemic barriers to community development.

All VISTA service activities must be designed to support one or more specific anti-poverty projects at a site. Applications must clearly define the anti poverty initiative being created or enhanced as opposed to focusing solely on capacity building for the organization. The antipoverty initiative described in the Application Narrative must carry through to the Performance Measures and to the VISTA Assignment Description(s), created by approved sponsors as part of the recruitment process.

Programming Priorities & Priority Populations

- **Economic Opportunity:** Housing and Eviction Prevention, Employment/Workforce Development, and Bridging the Digital Divide
- **Education:** School Readiness, K-12 Success, Career and Technical Education (CTE), College Access and Success, and STEM, including remote learning in all areas
- **Healthy Futures:** Access to Health Care particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Security, and Opioid Addiction Prevention and Recovery
- **Veterans and Military Families:** Economic Opportunity, Education, and Healthy Futures
- **Priority Populations:** Rural communities, Indian country, and areas of concentrated poverty
- **Additional Priority Consideration:** Projects that work in the above areas and populations that address issues of racial equity.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

AmeriCorps VISTA's commitment to addressing poverty includes focusing on projects that create or strengthen opportunities for low-income individuals to develop workforce knowledge and skills that will meet the needs of employers. In addition, projects that focus on housing are strongly encouraged to apply.

Priority areas include:

- **Housing and Eviction Prevention:** Transitioning individuals into or helping them remain in safe, affordable housing, with a special focus on veterans and those displaced due to COVID-19 related unemployment. Organizations focused on eviction prevention are also strongly encouraged to apply.
- **Employment/Workforce Development:** Improving or creating job skills training programs, particularly career and technical education (CTE) programs, that lead to increased employment.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Improving access to computers and high-speed internet as well as the skills to effectively use this technology, particularly for underserved rural and tribal areas.

EDUCATION

The VISTA program will support projects that enhance access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children.

AmeriCorps VISTA will target new project development in communities not currently served by

other AmeriCorps VISTA education focused projects and with large concentrations of low-income students (e.g., Title I schools).

Priority areas include:

- **School readiness** and **learning loss** for economically disadvantaged children.
- **K-12 success** in student educational and behavioral outcomes in low-achieving schools, including remote learning program development.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** to help students gain the skills they need to compete for employment.
- **College access and success** for low-income students.
- **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs as pathways for economically disadvantaged students.

HEALTHY FUTURES

The VISTA program will give priority to projects that meet health needs for economically disadvantaged individuals.

Priority areas include:

- **Access to Health Care:** Connecting economically disadvantaged individuals to preventative education and treatment/recovery services regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and opioid crisis, to include mental health services. For FY 2021, we will continue to look for new project opportunities, specifically in geographic areas not currently served by other VISTA or other CNCS healthy futures projects. Programming in this area must focus on interventions that directly benefit individuals as opposed to supporting research efforts or supplanting medical staff.
 - o As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, there continues to be many different negative impacts on low-income individuals and families. Existing AmeriCorps VISTA sponsors wishing to reorient some of their programming to address these issues should contact their Portfolio Manager to discuss their options.
 - o AmeriCorps VISTA encourages public health agencies and their community partners to consider using AmeriCorps VISTA members to create robust contact tracing programs that not only serve low-income communities but utilizes those community members as contact tracers. The Center for Disease Control has called on all communities to “scale up and train a large contact tracer workforce and work collaboratively across public and private agencies to stop the

transmission of COVID-19.” Public health agency representatives can contact AmeriCorps VISTA directly at vista@americorps.gov for additional information.

- **Food Security:** Alleviating hunger and increasing access to nutritious food, particularly the development of alternate food distribution and feeding sites to accommodate closures of traditional feeding sites, such as schools or after-school program sites. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to, individual food banks and pantries; networks of food banks and K-12 schools and after-school programs.

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

AmeriCorps VISTA will support projects that focus on low-income veterans and military families as beneficiaries.

Priority areas include:

- **Economic opportunity** – employment and veterans’ homelessness prevention/reduction.
- **Education** – school readiness, success in K-12 education, career and technical education (CTE) and post-secondary employment success.
- **Healthy futures** – opioid addiction prevention and recovery.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

- **Rural Communities** - VISTA seeks a balanced portfolio of urban and rural programming. More than 35% of those living in rural counties live in high-poverty areas, and 85% of persistent poverty counties are in rural America. VISTA will continue to invest resources to create economic opportunity and ensure access to health care in rural communities.
- **Areas of Concentrated Poverty** - Additionally, priority will be given to projects that serve areas of concentrated poverty. This is defined as Census tracts or counties with poverty rates at or above 20 percent. These can be rural or urban areas, and the projects can be located in or serve the high-poverty areas. Special consideration should be given to persistent poverty areas – those that have had a poverty level of 20 percent or higher for 30 years or more. To assist in targeting these areas, USDA has developed a [concentrated poverty mapping tool](#) that provides a way to identify them easily.

VISTA Member Benefits & Logistics

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve at sponsoring organizations for approximately 40 hours per week and address issues that have been locally identified as community priorities. The project goals and activities are designed to build the sponsor's capacity to serve low-income communities. CNCS provides a modest living allowance depending on the county in which the VISTA serves, health benefits, and childcare benefits (if eligible). Members also receive either the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or an end-of-service cash stipend upon successful completion of their full year of service.

Application Checklist

The application includes the following sections:

- Applicant Information
- Application Information
- Narratives
- Performance Measures
- Documents: Letters of Support (College/University President, Community Partner); Resume of Supervisor(s); and VISTA Assignment Description (VAD).

Review Process & Next Steps

Review Process: After applications are submitted by November 12, 2020, CCNYPA's review committee will review applications and will offer revisions, if needed, to qualified applicants on or before **December 1, 2020**.

Revised Applications are due to CCNYPA by **December 17, 2020**. CCNYPA will then send final applications to the CNCS Regional Office for final approval and awarding of AmeriCorps VISTA projects.

Next Steps (if project is awarded):

- **Virtual Supervisors' Orientation**, is mandatory for awarded applicants, and receiving the VISTA project is contingent upon attendance:

Thursday, **March 25, 2021** or Tuesday, **March 30, 2021**

- **Host-Site Agreement** - An agreement between CCNYPA and the CCNYPA*VISTA Host Site that details mandatory events, reporting requirements, and policies of the CCNYPA*VISTA program. This will be distributed in conjunction with the virtual Supervisors' Orientation.

If you have questions or need additional information please contact:

- Lucio Perez at lucio@compactnypa.org, 570-295-5670 and/or
- Danelle Wagner at danelle@compactnypa.org, 717-425-8405

Resources

Please visit [our website](#) for the following resources.

- Host Site Application Template (you will complete the actual application via an individualized Google Folder)
- Logic Model Template
- Sample VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) & Instructions
- VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) Template